

*Thos. Keel Aug<sup>r</sup> 22. 95.*  
THE

SHOTLEY BRIDGE FOX CHACE;

A  
DESCRIPTIVE DIDACTIC POEM.

INTERSPERSED WITH

ALLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS,

ON THE

*MORALS OF THE TIMES.*

---

BY THOMAS THORBURN.

---

— k

---

I see the circling hunt, of noisy men,  
Burst law's enclosure, leap the mounds of right,  
Pursuing and pursued, each other's prey;  
As wolves, for rapine; as the fox, for wiles;  
Till death that mighty hunter, earths them all.

---

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

---

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1795.

ST. JOHN'S BAPTIST CHURCH

ST. JOHN'S BAPTIST CHURCH



## A D D R E S S.

THIS poetical performance introduced to public observance in an unpolished dress, will perhaps be deemed by some, as rude; by others, as impertinent; more particularly, since it contains the harangue of an animal, to a populace, from the den, where he had taken refuge; and appearing as a pleader for his own right, in the unbounded goodness of the Supreme Being, and also, as an *honest reformer* of the vices and corruptions now prevalent in this degenerate age.

The place, from whence this poem derives its name and existence, is SHOTLEY BRIDGE, a small village town, situate upon the river Derwent, in the county of Durham; about fourteen miles south-west of Newcastle: Several of its inhabitants are of German extract, from which kingdom they were brought over by government in the last century; for the purpose of manufacturing of swords, and other instruments of war; and who do still support their character in that profession, their articles being noted for as great a degree of perfection as any in this kingdom.

My particular motives for engaging in this pursuit at first, was purely with a view to give a check to the profanation of the SABBATH; and also, on account of several people, of the lower class, there, as well as in many other parts of the kingdom, who are much suspected of *thefts* of the feathered

race, as well as FOXES ; and, who either regale upon the same themselves, or carry them to market, and expose them to sale ; to the injury of their neighbours, the violation of the laws of justice, honesty, and moderation ; to say nothing of their own happiness.

Being led to speak of vices of this nature, I was constrained to consider others, in a higher circle of life, as being equally impious, unjust, and oppressive ; and to let each have their proportionate share of exclamation ; especially, since they are now manifestly with a high hand, forcing their way through all the rules of common decency, and prudence ; and sapping as it were the foundations of piety, and liberty.

Should any *testy* critic object to any personifications of this sort ; or to their having a tendency to any seemingly national reprehensions ? To this I answer, that not only things animate, but also inanimate, are said, in the sacred oracles, to convey to us an idea of declaiming against OPPRESSORS ; witness *Balaam's ass* ; Hell and the grave ; The stone out of the wall ; and The beam from wood, &c. And if I have done amiss, in this respect, I think I shall only be blameable, or rather censured, in deviating from an unerring guide.

In short, I do by no means promise myself any reward from the merits of this performance ; nor do I flatter myself with the hopes of pleasing all persons, to whom it may come ; neither have I used



any embellishments in any respect from the original draught; an eye to truth has hitherto been my sole aim; the which I submit to the impartial candour of the public, as a poor piece of sense which I give unto them, for the cultivating of more noble and refined sentiments in those who may be ignorant of the principles of morality, that thereby they may be enabled to discern between good and evil, to chose the one and avoid the other; which is the highest expectation of the author,

*T. THORBURN.*

any small amount in any respect, but the  
change of eye to another has been  
made, and the whole is now in the  
state of a blank, as a new page of a book.  
I give this to you for the purpose of your  
not being misled by the words which are  
out of the principles of the world, but  
that be guided by the spirit of the  
world, and the spirit of the world, which is the  
light of the world.

1793

*Thos. Peel*

---

THE  
SHOTLEY BRIDGE

FOX CHACE, &c.

---

ON fox hunting awake, my muse!  
Raife admiration, to diffuse  
Her lively notes, sublimely free,  
In sweetest songs of melody.

To *Shotley Bridge* confine the same,  
Nor elsewhere roam in quest of fame;  
And by a narrative, display  
Some *useful hints* upon the way.

Sometime ago, a fox was caught,  
Hard by this place, and homeward brought;  
Whose maw was strong enough to bear,  
Eight gallons of the stoutest beer.

In chains, his captors did him lay,  
Until that he the *shot* could pay;  
Or at the least till gales might blow,  
To thaw the deep collected snow.

Six weary weeks confin'd he laid,  
Upon a stony sandy bed;  
His meats, dead crows, and such like store,  
Unpitied both by rich and poor.

No blood, to quench his parching thirst,  
 No pampering dainties for repast ;  
 While gazers view with curious eye,  
 His shape and anguish joyfully.

But now, alas ! the *day* is come,  
 When he receives his dreadful doom ;  
 When horses, hounds, and men, all brave  
 Resolve he shall no quarter have.

On March, th' eleventh, ninety-five,  
 Men, horses, hounds, thus all alive ;  
 This memorable *hunt* took place,  
 And seem'd to vie with Chevy Chase.

The fox, poor animal ! must pay,  
 For all the *beer* he swill'd away ;  
 Or at the least his quota be,  
 Ere enemies will set him free.

His policy avails him nought,  
 Suspence and anguish deaden thought ;  
 While wanton foes, of every sort,  
 Crown him, forsooth, to make them sport.

But hark ! what jars annoy my ear,  
 From other sportsmen, drawing near ?  
 Some absentees, who much displeas'd,  
 Will not yet have the fox releas'd.

Exclaiming, they object to pay  
 An equal share, on this first day ;  
 And deem the motion too severe,  
 On those who really absent were.

Tush ! tush ! disputes at distance be,  
 Refrain to peace and harmony !  
 Dismiss a train, without delay,  
 To *Newland's Fell*, and make no stay.

The sportsmen now for cheerers call,  
 And drink some loyal healths withal;  
 They wish success unto the chase,  
 And hope anticipate a pace.

The footmen outward bound did steer,  
 All anxious striving to get near;  
 To see the wily fox display,  
 His cunning shifts for life that day.

But ere the horsemen were aware,  
 The hounds set off in full career;  
 This gave alarm in time of need,  
 And all now mount with eager speed.

Exclaiming as they push along,  
 That such a *hum* was mighty wrong;  
 In those who had their eyes to see,  
 And *virtuosos* thought to be!

See! see the hounds, along they trace,  
 How keenly they pursue the chase;  
 Whilst their full cry is heard around,  
 And echoing rocks return the sound.

Those who our reynard's guardians were,  
 Had cautiously ta'en previous care;  
 To set him off at early day,  
 That he might rightly have fair play.

To have his life not cut too short,  
 Would surely yield them better sport;  
 Enlarging more the charming view,  
 To hunters, and spectators too.

Though now the guardians thought it fit,  
 A *cruel kindness* to commit!  
 They cropt poor reynard's ears, that he  
 Might still the more distinguish'd be.



This treatment, patiently he took,  
And neither snarl'd, or silence broke;  
But lightly skipping o'er the plain,  
Look'd three times back—as in disdain.

Yet when the cries of hounds surround him,  
A thousand thousand fears confound him;  
His ready wit seem'd then at bay,  
His cunning, yielding to dismay.

At this momentous crisis, he  
Redoubled speed, for liberty!  
Crossing the *Derwent* in his rout,  
And fairly threw the hunters out.

Then on to *Shotley Bridge* he goes,  
Defying all his cruel foes;  
A butcher's dog, which dar'd to seize,  
He bravely overcame with ease.

A *tarrier* too would rashly try,  
To snatch him as he fled by;  
But reynard's tusks, so keen and free,  
Soon foil'd its mad ferocity.

These vipers thus shook off, he tries  
To gain some covert from surprise;  
Where he might breathe in snug retreat,  
And make escape the more complete.

But while deep scheming where to fly,  
A quaker's dog did him espy;  
Which fierce in choler made advance,  
And quash'd his dawning hopes at once.

For to the ground he laid him low  
Determin'd on his overthrow;  
Which must have been, had not success  
Besfriended reynard in distress.

A man of wealth, upon the watch,  
To close the scene, runs up to catch  
The fox, as booty, then to claim  
Demands on merit for the fame.

But stop, O foolish man! and know  
This fox will soon thy folly show;  
When courage pleads in his defence,  
To foil thee in this circumstance.

Return, return from whence thou came,  
Nor yet forsake thy lovely dame;  
Let Hymen's arbour thee solace,  
Rather than this delicious chase.

Since thou a horseman's rank don't chuse,  
A footman here's of little use;  
For aught but hardships, which the poor  
Seem still allotted to endure.

But to return; the fox's trace  
Crosses some swamps, then takes a southern space;  
Through *Brighill* lanes, in steady course,  
For *Confett Groves*, his choice resource.

This plan, no obstacles oppose,  
O'er mounds and fields bold reynard goes;  
There in a cavern of the earth,  
He refuge finds, nor dreads his death.—

Permit me, in a single verse,  
My thoughts recal, and them rehearse;  
Which rest in those who sport pursue,  
Horses and hounds, and footmen too.

Behold they come, with voice jocund,  
Spectators gaze on rising ground;  
The rocks, and vales, and hills unite,  
In perfecting the wish'd delight.

The hounds, all eager in the chace  
 And horsemen too pursue apace ;  
 Who each for mastery vainly strove,  
 To come first up to the coal grove.

If I can information trust,  
 The man who there appeared first,  
 Was reynard's keeper, with a friend,  
 Who, brother like, did him attend.

The rear, inspir'd with active care,  
 Nor vigour, nor attention spare ;  
 While footmen every nerve exert,  
 To vie with horsemen on their part.

The joyous number on that day,  
 Were more than fifty in array ;  
 Who civilly on reynard wait,  
 As if he'd been a prince of state.

Yet he such honour did despise,  
 And every form they could devise ;  
 Whether by flattery or threats,  
 He all their boasted skill defeats.

For no admittance could be found,  
 To his snug *palace* under ground ;  
 Where safely guarded from surprise,  
 He spurn'd assaulting enemies.

So finding every effort vain,  
 They dastardly reversed their strain,  
 Burning with shame and inward grief,  
 They now abuse him for a thief.

They blam'd his stealing to this place,  
 And robbing them of a full chace ;  
 " Ungrateful wretch ! they loudly cry,  
 To serve us so disgracefully.

“ How long have we thy life sustain’d ?  
 How long with food and drink maintain’d ?  
 Allowing comfort in degree,  
 To assuage thy fancied misery.

“ Thy life was certainly at stake,  
 When cunningly thou stole the *drake* ;  
 Our intercession sav’d thee then,  
 Or thou had’st never reach’d this den.

“ Justice sometimes may lenient be,  
 But judgment hangs o’er rogues like thee ;  
 Who spare no fowls, or goose, or gander,  
 To rob and kill ye slyly wander.

“ Is such thy kindness to thy friends,  
 By shifts and tricks to gain thy ends ;  
 Merely on purpose to evade  
 The punishment we’ve on thee laid ?

“ How dar’st thou thus abuse our love,  
 Preferring wicked *self* above  
 Our right and title, and provoke  
 Our keen resentment at this stroke.

“ Voracious thief ! not birds alone,  
 Thy cruelty, ev’n lambs have known,  
 If once thy appetite but crave,  
 Nor innocence, or entreaties save.

“ O subtle enemy ! how long  
 Are we from thee to suffer wrong ?  
 A *by-word*, thy detested race,  
 To pity, and to honesty, *disgrace* !”

The fox lay silent all the while,  
 Though vexed, yet he forc’d a smile ;  
 And then began this bold retort,  
 Yes, gentlemen, I’ve spoilt your sport !

Yet truth and justice, by the way,  
 Claim some reply to what you say ;  
 And I that mode of speech will use,  
 In which you lard me with abuse.

You know I act by nature's laws,  
 As preordain'd by her First Cause ;  
 Whose power and wisdom I obey,  
 While certain instinct shews the way.

If it be thus the case with me,  
 As I affirm, then why do ye  
 Raise persecution, to prevent  
 The end for which I have been sent.

For were it in my power to cease,  
 From what I am, to what you please ;  
 In vain might truth divine declare,  
 That such as I created were.

By an Almighty Arm I move,  
 By instinct in my circle rove,  
 With other creatures to annoy  
 Those comforts which you so enjoy.

If I be evil, as you said,  
 The fault's not mine, I was thus made ;  
 Nor can I in the least decline,  
 From this unhappy state of mine.

When you of theft do me accuse,  
 You wrongfully do me abuse ;  
 Because it is my province set  
 By Will Divine, my food to get.

My lot is cast, by sovereign care,  
 Which doth my due support prepare ;  
 And timely deals with lib'ral hand,  
 To all who breathe on sea or land.



On His benevolence I rely,  
 In all my straits for a supply ;  
 Whether from farm-yard, house, or field,  
 If hunger calls, I soon do yield,

When prompted thus, I eager seize  
 Such victims as my palate please ;  
 For sharp remorse, nor mercy kind,  
 Do ever penetrate my mind.

How oft am I in danger caught,  
 For breach of faith I ne'er was taught ;  
 And oft'ner deemed to divorce  
 A law, which never was in force.

A law, prohibiting to range  
 O'er mountains, hills, and opening plains ;  
 To use my speed, and cunning wit,  
 And run as long as I have feet.

Then, gentlemen, I hope you see,  
 The justness and propriety ;  
 I have, in nature's boundless store,  
 By *deed of gift*, as said before.

Therefore, since you and I do share  
 Of common benefits, but spare  
 My life, I humbly you do crave,  
 Dismiss, and frankly me relieve.

But ere we part, let me renew,  
 My kind and last address to you ;  
 And let our actions weighed be,  
 In scales of truth and honesty.

Ye all are sons of human race,  
 Who are assembled round this place ;  
 Yet most of you my knowledge proves,  
 To be much worse than fox or wolves.

Or any other beast of prey,  
Which roams abroad by night or day;  
Whose main intent is to devour,  
Such creatures as are in their power.

The common Parent of us all,  
Both rich and poor, and great and small;  
Bestows such gifts as I shall name,  
That you His glory might proclaim.

Proclaim, in higher strains than flow  
From brutes, who must so little know;  
But senses, life, and actions free,  
And cease at death, no more to be.

But by benevolence you are crown'd,  
With rational power, and are enthron'd;  
In princely state, for to command,  
The lordships of both sea and land.

Moreover, love, divinely free,  
Has added further unto thee,  
A strength of mind, to contemplate,  
The glories of a future state.

Passions besides, of various kind,  
To spur or check thy wandering mind;  
And language too, for to express  
A sense of goodness in distress.

In all creation, none can vie  
With man, in point of majesty,  
Nor in high motives to rejoice,  
And praise his God with grateful voice.

The privileges of your race,  
Above our kind, I now have trac'd;  
And have presented them to view,  
I next shall other causes shew.

Your non-improvement of the same,  
 In any shape that you can frame ;  
 And he to me appears in view,  
 A picture of a various hue.

On this black picture I do find  
 Four different figures, all inclin'd ;  
 To trace those steps wherein I go,  
 And yet wear innocence and show.

First of the *poor*, next of the *rich*,  
 With *officers of state* and *church* ;  
 I shall just give a hint on each,  
 While truth and full conviction preach.

I hope some of ye will apply,  
 Such vices as I shall descry,  
 Unto yourselves, and will forbear,  
 From guilt which vibrates in your ear.

I now treat of the *worthless* poor,  
 And find much vice lie at their door ;  
 Which yet no human laws do pry,  
 Nor dive into their villany.

The frauds of various sorts you use,  
 And justice too you oft abuse ;  
 Because her disciplines expose  
 Your crimes, to punishment and woes.

Superiors of all ranks you hate,  
 And deem that fortune's golden fate ;  
 To them prove partial, but to you,  
 She frowns on wealth, and favour too.

The country's laws, and those who rule,  
 You both despise and ridicule ;  
 And wish your barrier's strength may fall,  
 Like Jericho's recorded wall.

Nay, not on laws of men, but *Gad*  
 Ye pour contempt, in jovial mood ;  
 His day, his word, and ordinance,  
 You disrespect them all at once.

Yea, even at those, to whom His name,  
 Bears a resemblance to the same ;  
 Ye set at nought, and do revile,  
 As worse than filth, or reptile vile.

In short, what cursed oaths do flow,  
 Against His name, and glorious show ;  
 While awful threat'nings loud proclaim,  
 His just displeasure at the same.

Frugality, ye do degrade,  
 And throw contempt on honest trade ;  
 Fill up your vacant rooms with pride,  
 That slothful ease may there reside.

Extravagance too, in wild extremes,  
 From you obtains her wasteful ends ;  
 Nor can your indigence remove  
 Those baneful guests which you so love.

To *Bacchus*, ye low homage pay,  
 And all his orders blind obey ;  
 While families want, all prostrate lie,  
 Before this vile idolatry.

Next, idle dogs with hounds ye nurse,  
 For empty pleasure, and yet worse ;  
 To such ye slight provision give,  
 Till by destructive means they live.

How oft is slander brought to pass,  
 Against me, by your lower class ?  
 For damage done to stocks and masters,  
 When those foul fiends appear the traitors.

But why should I your dogs impeach,  
 With guilt, when human forms can stretch  
 Their hands, and reach their neighbour's store,  
 Then charge it to the fox's score.

When darkness, in the silent night,  
 Her curtain draws to veil the light ;  
 I then the season must improve,  
 To seek that venison I love.

In such retirement, others do  
 Assume my garb and traffic too ;  
 Both thief, and wolf, and debauchee,  
 In this exactly copy me.

The farmers often captive take,  
 Lamb, goose, and hen, with duck and drake,  
 Whose piteous notes offend my ear,  
 Yet I the blame of all must bear.

O strange to think ! that men should thus  
 Their subterfuges make of us ;  
 Blush, blush for shame, when ye recal,  
 How your reproach on us does fall.

I can, and do to you confess,  
 The last time that I did transgress ;  
 The very month, and day, and place,  
 To mention I think no disgrace.

But that I shall refer unto  
*Allen-Ford-Bridge*, the same to shew  
 Such curious travellers, who may pass  
 That road, and take a cheerful glass.

The snow being deep, the frost severe,  
 And press'd by hunger's pinching care ;  
 I thought no harm to seek supply,  
 In this my keen emergency.



And to that neighbourhood did go,  
 Amidst the bitter frost and snow ;  
 And lucky in a farm-yard found,  
 A well fed duck, alive and found.

I seized the fame, and bore her thence,  
 Delighted with my friendly chance ;  
 No clamour reach'd her owner's ears,  
 No jealousy awak'd his fears.

Being thus from danger quite secure,  
 Feasting and pleasure I procure ;  
 Indulg'd a vile insipid ease,  
 That I my senses more might please.

Besides this lethargic suspense,  
 I held another vain pretence ;  
 Delusive to the same degree,  
 Founded on dire necessity.

Thinking this rule would me protect,  
 In safety from designed attacks ;  
 And would tranquillity maintain,  
 In spite of all your hostile train.

Further, I had for a support,  
 Another ground to yeild comfort ;  
 Namely protection from a day,  
 Which holy is, as churchmen say.

And so do I affirm the same,  
 With Christians too of every name,  
 That day, all keep with holy joy,  
 So none dar'd then my peace annoy.

Yet papish faith to hereticks,  
 Surrenders oft by hellish tricks ;  
 And the next morning I did find,  
 Most of this neighbourhood combin'd.

Combin'd they were without delay,  
 To be reveng'd on me that day ;  
 Impeding snows, escape defy,  
 Where then, alas, was I to fly ?

Yet natural life being truly sweet,  
 And to preserve it is but meet ;  
 So rather than my hope should yield,  
 I resolutely took the field.

I try'd once more what I could do,  
 And bade despondency adieu ;  
 Dame fortune might propitious be,  
 To save my life and liberty.

In this dilemma, I did rise,  
 Alarm'd and fearful of surprise ;  
 But soon bestir'd myself to speed,  
 I saw my danger, and my need.

Deep frothy snow delay'd my flight,  
 When dogs and hunters came in sight ;  
 Nor strength nor courage could avail,  
 And even hopes of refuge fail.

I then submitted to your hands,  
 In full obedience to commands ;  
 Leaving the issue in your power,  
 The fruits of which I now endure.

This tragic scene I now relate,  
 Of this my forlorn dismal fate ;  
 Pray do but ponder who is worse,  
 And who deserves the heaviest curse.

Did the *Almighty* storms shower down,  
 Upon your race, in awful frown ;  
 For every breach of his commands,  
 As now ye do with violent hands.

How many of ye here would be,  
Sporting yourselves, in torturing me ;  
Or who of all your worthy race,  
Could merit claim before his face ?

Should justice once become severe,  
To mark your faults with strictest care ;  
Where then could ye pretend to fly,  
From his all-searching watchful eye ?

Will you agree with hell and death,  
To avoid the torrent of his wrath ;  
Or do you think that mercy can  
Save you at last, in this your plan ?

No, heaven forbids ! and so do I,  
All human artifice descry ;  
Let justice, truth, and love, then guide,  
To limit more your boundless pride.

Did ye but seriously reflect,  
How much your manners counteract ;  
The dignity of men, who be  
The objects of divinity.

I'm sure you would more humble be,  
And shew more mercy unto me ;  
And to the deity apply,  
For that forgiveness you deny.

You mirth and jollity display,  
Upon His hallowed blessed day ;  
Then meet in troops at public inns,  
To fill the measure of your sins.

You ought to venerate His love,  
And more regard the God above ;  
And should, with reverential awe,  
Revere the sanction of his law.

You should endeavour to refrain,  
 Those customs which ye do maintain ;  
 And in no circumstance approve,  
 The vices that I now reprove.

For should you still in such persist,  
 And admonition's voice resist ;  
 Your *contempt* will one day arise,  
 And flash like lightening in your eyes.

I now have done with the first class,  
 And to the next do forward pass ;  
 These are the *rich* by name, and bear  
 The titles of a higher sphere.

How many of this stamp disgrace,  
 The honour of their noble race ;  
 And with their golden store defend,  
 Lawless injustice to the end.

Ye are tools of arbitrary power,  
 By which you do distress the poor ;  
 In various ways which I shall name,  
 While sad experience proves the same.

Oppression's yoke, in different shapes,  
 You wreathe about their feeble necks ;  
 And by the same despotic law,  
 Compulsively their minds o'erawe.

Small farms you do extend to great,  
 To favour those in wealthy state ;  
 That such may qualified be,  
 The more to oppress society.

Our modern *stones* must surely sleep,  
 And wooden *beams*, which dare not peep  
 In language plain, that dreadful *woe*,  
 Against oppressors who act so.

Your rented lands you highly screw,  
 Beyond their worth, beyond their due ;  
 Industrious farmers feel such smarts,  
 As pierce quite through their honest hearts.

Nay more than this, you, to support  
 The luxuries of a splendid court ;  
 Thither resort, and there consume  
 Your rents, leaving poor men at home.

These poor men must beg or starve,  
 Wanting employ their needs to serve ;  
 While ye on pleasure's florid tide,  
 Expand your sails of lust and pride.

Insatiable in this pursuit,  
 You continence and shame pollute ;  
 Depreciate piety so chaste,  
 And claim intemperance for your guest.

The play house. and the masquerade, -  
 You do maintain in high parade ;  
 And brothel-houses too likewise,  
 From you obtain their rich supplies.

Horse-races too ye patronise,  
 Which much your virtue stigmatize ;  
 And often drain you of that store,  
 Which ye so zealously adore.

To cock-fights ye with joy resort,  
 Where sharpers hold their sacred court ;  
 And swindlers too embolden'd are,  
 Part of your property to share.

Next, packs of hounds and horses too,  
 You keep on purpose to pursue,  
 Both our rude tribe and harmless hares,  
 Alike we feel your sportive snares.



*Sportive!* let me recal this word,  
 And say, death, famine, and the sword,  
 Better become your noble blood,  
 Than what ye do in jovial mood.

Such animals do much impair,  
 Your island's food, as I declare;  
 Especially when dearth prevails,  
 Such with the *poor* can poise the scales.

Could calculations now be made,  
 Of this luxuriant shameful trade;  
 The cost of such enormous waste,  
 Would be enroll'd in *civil list*.

This palpable abuse restrain,  
 By prudent methods, or regain  
 The loss in future, and apply  
 To them, who on your aid rely.

But here to stop, would be in vain,  
 Behold what scenes of private gain,  
 Unfolding to the naked eye!  
 Assist me in the sharp reply.

To *parliament* for acts ye sue,  
 To rob poor people of their due;  
 Of common right, which they possess,  
 And to yourselves the same engross.

What would your ancient Britons say,  
 Were they now present at this day;  
 To find their liberal system gone,  
 From the *poor class*, to *rich* alone.

Through this resource, you heavy load,  
 Encourage greatly highway roads;  
 And numerous gates, that you may more,  
 Increase the interest of your store.

This imposition will appear,  
Most plain unto the candid ear;  
Since croses by-roads repair'd might be,  
By parishes, would they agree.

I might have further added yet,  
How ye your dignity forget;  
And honour too, when ye pretend,  
That *poor men* should your estates defend.

How comes it, that superior clay,  
Demeans itself with shame this way?  
That ye should from your rank descend,  
To claim such for an *equal* friend.

No titles of this sort ye spurn,  
In every form, but in this turn;  
Your personal interests do command  
Pomp, wealth, and grandeur, all to stand.

Like the bright sun, when *Joshua* spöke,  
Did cease from his revolving stroke;  
And at his word did light display,  
To *Israel's* army, a whole day.

The laws enforce! and 'tis but just,  
Such *menials* should attend your lust;  
Both as militia and by sea,  
That landed gentry may go free?

Free, did I say? let me retract,  
And say you share an equal lot;  
In the militia, with the poor,  
Then why do they complain so fore?

Yes, parishes are through this bane,  
Oppressed much, and in the main,  
Have been of late distressed more,  
By raising seamen on your score.

Besides, the *slave-trade* brings a shame,  
 Upon the annals of your fame;  
 Nor will your *state* from you withdraw,  
 This cursed traffic, by their law.

Unhappy victims, that such are,  
 Thus doom'd to bondage and despair;  
 By those who bear the Christian name,  
 And yet think this nor crime, nor shame.

Is this the liberty, which you  
 So much extol, and yet undo?  
 When you, for sake of sordid gain,  
 From men their birth-right do restrain.

How can you think that iron chains,  
 Become those men whose virtue reigns;  
 Or do ye dream that such as they,  
 Can bear your cruelty this way?

Once more,—which shall this head conclude,  
 Ye do export the nation's food;  
 Unto such foes as you consign,  
 Almost to punishment divine.

What less than *perjury* must it be,  
 Our king and country to betray?  
 Thus to exhaust that plenteous store,  
 And cause a famine on this score?

In short, words fail me to express,  
 The avenues to deep distress;  
 Which do through *selfish* persons lie,  
 To annihilate your liberty.

I to your *state* now turn mine eyes,  
 And view the fabric with surprise;  
 And fain decorum would unite.  
 With decorations so replete.

How vast, and grand is your domain,  
And all your show of gaudy train;  
'Thy form, attractively does draw,  
My mind with reverential awe.

I then inquir'd to this purport,  
Does *guilt* appear within this court?  
Custom and shame did soon reply,  
No imperfections here come nigh!

Just as I aim'd to come away,  
*Prudence* and *truth* call'd me to stay;  
'To make a pause,—and more inspect  
'This system, as they would direct.

*Experience* said, she would assist  
Both them and me, at our request;  
And hop'd I should discover more,  
Than what I e'er had seen before.

Discover what? said I, have you  
The keys of this mysterious clue?  
At your command? or are you vain  
In giving me suspense and pain?

They said, they had, and soon would shew  
Intrigues within, which few folks know;  
If now, while present, only I  
Would on their credit free rely.

I said, their credit was my bond,  
Hoping they would not much abound;  
But free proceed with cautious care,  
To tell me what they could declare.

They all agreed, and made it plain,  
That vile *corruption* there did reign!  
From whence those public ills arose,  
Complain'd of, both by friends and foes.

The law, which is, or ought to be,  
 The province of community ;  
 Seems now converted to the use  
 Of those, who dignify this house.

From ruling manners of the place,  
 You'll really think the law disgrace !  
 Unwilling to return,—or own  
 Her native soil, without a frown.

Official insolence you'll find,  
 Existing here, of baneful kind ;  
 Which against justice dares obtrude,  
 And seldom turns to public good.

You boast of freedom, and what not ?  
 Like bedlamite, or democrat !  
 And of your constitution, can  
 Command the most consistent plan.

A plan most generous indeed,  
 Adapted well to suit the need,  
 Of *favourites*, who are nurs'd thereby,  
 And raise its praises to the sky.

Those pensioners of high degree,  
 On royal bounty banquet free ;  
 Like hungry babes, they suck the breast  
 Of charity, then *innocently* rest.

Such gentlemen, to a *reform*,  
 Aversion have, and angry storm,  
 At citizens, and bold stand forth,  
 To acquit themselves as friends to truth.

When motions for the public weal,  
 Are made by men of honest zeal ;  
 For peace, or moderate taxes, they  
 Still by majorities bear sway.



They drink out of your golden cup,  
Nor will they give their interests up;  
Demoniac like, their gain prevails,  
So long as *votes* can cast the scales.

In cruel wars you are involv'd;  
Nor can the question yet be solv'd;  
For their existence, more than this,  
Your home-born subjects to suppress.

What heavy loads of taxes are,  
Impos'd upon our common fare?  
And articles of each degree,  
O'er-reach the *poor*, who blameless be.

What swarms of soldiery pervade,  
Each city, town, and village-shade?  
Who with assuming airs depress,  
The very bulwarks of your peace.

These military crowds augment,  
Your nations former discontent;  
And bring the strongest evidence,  
Against your present war with *France*.

A war, just meant to aggrandize,  
Immoderate power! to tyrannize,  
And to assume that iron yoke,  
Which some reformers lately broke.

To foreign princes you do send,  
Large subsidies, for to defend;  
Their country's vile despotic laws,  
Which prove ye friends to the same cause.

But what returns do they make you,  
For such expence, and kindness too?  
Nothing in fine, but insults done  
Unto your honour and your throne.

To peace, you still aversion have,  
 Nor will her olive branch receive;  
 Tho' *Wilberforce* most fluently,  
 Call'd your attention all that way.

Nor *Fox's* thunder, nor a *Grey*,  
 Whose eloquence none can dismay;  
 With *Sheridan* and *Lambton* brave,  
 Who all unite a peace to have.

They've been unanimously bold,  
 'Gainst measures, that do now unfold  
 Their tattered leaves, alas, too late!  
 Nor will those rags prevent our fate.

For C——r, and a D——fs,  
 With every other golden Afs;  
 Object all motions of this kind,  
 And vindicate their master's mind.

So long as *credit* will endure,  
 They still resources can procure;  
 To raise the national debt so high,  
 Till poverty prevents supply.

Whilst private bankruptcies abound,  
 And frauds and knavery prosper round;  
 By whom can estimates be made,  
 That e'er this debt shall be repaid?

To carry on this dismal war,  
 You know not why? with whom? or where?  
 Whether with *Holland* or with *France*,  
 Or any other foes by chance.

Ye must with elements contend,  
 And all that stormy tempests send;  
 With sickness, toil, and famine too,  
 Or valour will bid you adieu.

What numbers of recruited men,  
Are lately raised just for gain?  
Yea, ev'n from *sixty* to *thirteen*,  
Which bearing arms *may ill be seen*.

In short, you dare no credit give  
Unto those martial troops you have;  
But deem vicissitudes as rise,  
To hoodwink them with open eyes.

The press's liberty ye shut,  
Lest it expose your *clowen foot*;  
'Through this expedient merit yield,  
And truth, ashamed must quit the the field.

In lieu of this, there have of late,  
Been sycophants, who for the state  
Have wrote some things in its defence,  
To gain those favours you dispense.

A *Young*, and *Shanks*, with more beside,  
Have on the same voluptuous tide;  
Embark'd, with an expanded sail,  
To crush with vengeance reason's tale.

I shall not now attempt to find,  
How far they have left truth behind,  
But only mention that they do  
Barter with faith and conscience too.

For reason and plain facts coincide,  
That men, by nature, all were made  
Of equal clay, and equal claim,  
To love and liberty in aim.

Though providence has for good cause,  
Enacted good and wholesome laws;  
And rulers too, for to enforce  
The same 'gainst those who dare divorce.

And subjects too, who ruled are,  
By love, and a prudential care ;  
While obedience, like a handmaid free,  
Both claims protection and obeys.

But what if rulers deviate,  
From precepts of a higher state ;  
In such a case, must subjects lie,  
And yield obedience passively.

Reason I think, and justice say,  
Lawgivers should it homage pay ;  
And be restrain'd by the same law,  
By which they do their subjects awe.

For were it otherwise than this,  
Our ancestors have done amiss ;  
By bringing haughty tyrants down,  
And seating virtue on the throne.

Yea their offspring would sure also,  
Involved be, in guilt and woe ;  
And deem'd usurpers in disguise,  
Which men of candour do despise.

But who would thus their credit stain,  
As to assert ? much less maintain ;  
That your forefathers were unwise,  
And that you disapprove their choice.

So far from this, that they consent,  
In joint applauses of content ;  
And wish that vice asham'd may flee,  
While virtue crowns felicity.

But to return, I should have said,  
Late duties on the paper trade ;  
Are very heavy to be borne,  
And more oppression in its turn.

Because those men who do it make,  
And stationers, who do it take ;  
With sciences, of every name,  
Are much-injured through the same.

But chiefly persons who are poor,  
Can this hard tax but ill endure ;  
And scarce are able for to pay,  
Wages and school-books at this day.

Time fails me now, for to traverse,  
From this subject, while I rehearse ;  
Corruptions, they themselves transfuse,  
Through all the *members* in the house.

For when ye there a *seat* obtain,  
Election votes ye much do strain ;  
From freemen false, bribed to chuse,  
Through scenes of perjury and abuse.

Those putrid fountains of your ills,  
Which your politic cistern fills ;  
Do sap all liberty at once,  
And honesty do much enhance.

When honest men investigate,  
The sovereignty of your state ;  
And say, that rust does ill become,  
The courts of this resplendent dome.

Then treason stretches for his paw,  
And Habeas Corpus, as by law ;  
Courageously comes forth to try,  
Such men for life or liberty.

Attornies too do take their part,  
And strenuously each nerve exert ;  
To make counts of indictment stand,  
Compliant to their willing hand.



Next, numerous witnesses must be,  
 To prove a criminality ;  
 And to protract the process too,  
 Those criminals to overthrow.

A jury also, if they be  
 But well attach'd to loyalty ;  
 Seldom does *prejudice* obtain,  
 His glut yet 'mongst such worthy men.

How many families have been,  
 Of late, through your imperious spleen ;  
 To ruin brought, without delay,  
 And others sent to *Botany Bay*.

Had not an *Erskine* firm withstood,  
 The rage of yor impetuous flood ;  
 'Tis hard to judge what might have been,  
 The fate of many sober men.

But *he*, in oratorical stile,  
 Sentenced your system to exile ;  
 And shew'd in glaring colors plain,  
 The length of your imperial chain.

Moreover, he did specify,  
 Your bounds of British liberty ;  
 Call'd Britons to admire the same,  
 And strive to rise in virtuous fame.

Thus your court's eyes enlight'ned were,  
 A jury too its converts are ;  
 Whilst loud applauses, echo'd high,  
 Consolidate that fund of joy.

Once more,—I'm sorry to relate,  
 How excess, in your courtly state ;  
 Is now arriv'd to such extents,  
 That bills are brought for the contents.

Parliament bills, for to support  
 A prince, within this lordly court;  
 And heir apparent to the crown,  
 With other titles of renown.

In his luxuriant paths to stray,  
 Without restraint in pompous sway;  
 And unasham'd, he supplicates  
 The same, to pay his private debts.

Why, charity! don't you befriend,  
 A prince, who humbly can attend  
 Your door, and on your care rely?  
 How can you his request deny?

No, sympathy, withdraws her eyes,  
 And says, the deed would stigmatize,  
 My honour, to the last degree,  
 If I indulg'd such lenity.

Why, royal father! don't you own,  
 This prodigal to be your son?  
 How comes it then you'll not comply,  
 To yield to him a prompt supply?

You know your faith was pledg'd before,  
 Unto your subjects, on this score;  
 And after all, procrastinate,  
 The payment of this shameful debt.

Are promises of royal birth,  
 Become as strangers to all truth?  
 And must fidelity resign,  
 Her candour at your august shrine?

*Wealth* says, in Hanover I rest,  
 And to return have little taste;  
 Because *disturbances* of late,  
 Have much enfeebled my estate.

Compassion, in a soothing strain,  
Would glad her former rights regain ;  
And whilst she tenderly does pause,  
Necessity enforc'd a clause.

And says, since *John Bull* has thought fit,  
For to deny my former suit ;  
You must for present succour fly,  
To parliament for a supply.

Besides, you now can further plead,  
Your new alliance, and the need ;  
You now of them do crave support,  
And certainly they will comfort.

*Example*, furnish'd with regret,  
Did make reply, after this rate ;  
And said, profusion was become  
A nuisance, in our court at home.

This maxim will, I greatly doubt,  
Produce severe effects, throughout  
All Europe, but especially  
'Mongst those who hate Regality.

*Disgust* said likewise, Men of sense,  
Which did esteem preeminence ;  
Would be much mortified to hear,  
Assumers of this rank appear.

No less than thrice, for to present  
Petitions for his pressing want ;  
And thought that bounty's stores would fail  
To give pride more licentious sail.

Yet generosity at last,  
Reflecting upon what was past ;  
Did with a tone of speech inveigh,  
Against her partner, decency.

For her silence in such a case,  
 When honesty, to proud disgrace,  
 Was likely to become a prey,  
 And truth disarm'd by popular sway.

Yet since the nation's credit now,  
 Is call'd upon, and honour too;  
 And both are lying at the stake,  
 I placidly concessions make.

And to his baneful need do grant,  
 Some more subsistence to his want;  
 By such prudential means, that he  
 No more reproach shall bring on me.

In hopes that odiums of this kind,  
 Will buried be, and out of mind;  
 If he by frugal ways restrain,  
 Those vices that he does maintain.

And do with virtue interchange,  
 And in her field profusely range;  
 Until he fills that destin'd throne,  
 Where virtuous subjects will him own.

There's one thing more, which does affect  
 Your country's weal, in terms direct:  
 Namely, how bulwarks of our land  
 Inactive are, tho' in command.

Whilst enemies obstruct our trade,  
 And prizes of our ships have made;  
 In this respect, as plainly shewn,  
 They fairly beat us two to one.

If *Vernon*, *Rook*, or *Hawk*, so free,  
 Or *Warren*, were allow'd to see,  
 Your admirals becalm'd so long,  
 With yawning lullaby for song!

This would almost revive their dust,  
To reassume their former trust ;  
And thunder terror on all foes,  
Who dare the British flag oppose.

In vain, alas ! my thoughts recoil,  
From dreams fantastic to that soil,  
Where nothing grows but deep despair,  
And languid hopes but add to fear.

For if you seriously reflect,  
What more success can you expect ;  
When ye your sailors do oppress,  
In times of war and also peace ?

In time of peace, ye them disband ;  
Expos'd to shift on every hand ;  
Nor will ye succour to them grant,  
Tho' deep immerg'd in debt and want.

But when wars do commence, you seize  
Their persons, where and when ye please ;  
Depriving them of liberty,  
And comforts of society.

Moreover, when they captures make,  
Your officers do chiefly take  
Their booty first, then what remains,  
Is *trifling* for the seamen's pains.

Infringements, such hard treatment, lays,  
On sailors' liberties always ;  
So that their love reverts to fear,  
Self-preservation then their care !

Whether with enemies or friends,  
Or where they best may suit their ends ;  
Increase opponents to your cause,  
And advocates for *better* laws. —



The *church*, at last in stately frame,  
 Invites me to revere her name ;  
 And view with pleasure and delight,  
 Her charms, which so attract my sight.

Yes, noble *virgin* ! I espy,  
 Your graceful form of majesty ;  
 Like morning sky you do adorn,  
 With fleecy robes the bright ey'd morn.

If riches, of pure antique grace,  
 Your sanctimonious lovely face ;  
 Or rites, or titles, can avail,  
 Or such exterior shows of zeal.

Then you my warmest love excite,  
 And joy attractive claims delight ;  
 To be the object of her choice,  
 Under your shadow to rejoice.

Yet prudence still will interpose,  
 And kindly hints, that outward shows ;  
 Are like the apples of the Nile,  
 Which shrivel hands that would them feel.

These apples, touch'd, chastise desire,  
 And into ashes soon expire ;  
 So will this virgin's gaudy dress,  
 Your extasy as much depress.

If you will reason's rules receive,  
 And truth divine will credit give ;  
 They will abundantly you teach,  
 How far her purity doth reach.

And also will, in language plain,  
 Affirm that much of fordid gain,  
 Is stow'd within her sacred courts,  
 Which, load-stone like, draws in converts.

You mingle interest with the state,  
 And claim a kindred with the great :  
 Submit her *headship* to the same,  
 And vie with popish rites of fame.

Communion too you make a test,  
 For every one on civil list ;  
 To catch *Dissenters* in the net,  
 For whom prophanely it was set.

Many of these, few scruples make,  
 Conforming for mere lucre's sake ;  
 So sacred things are made a jest,  
 To lull the avaricious breast.

Nor stop the impositions here,  
 But traverse almost every where,  
 Throughout the liturgy you read,  
 As if the perfect Christian creed.

External forms, I might have said,  
 Are, by the same delusive trade,  
 Maintain'd in their parochial state,  
 And been the cause of much debate.

But passing these, I circumscribe,  
 Myself to the angelic tribe,  
 And more minutely shall confine,  
 This subject to the reverend line.

That ye are numerous, none deny,  
 But what the number, few descry ;  
 Yet does experience certify,  
 To all your inequality.

An inequality, I said,  
 Derived from ? or by whom made ?  
 Whether from Peter, or from John,  
 Or Clement, saints ? ye blush to own.

It matters not, yet hold your seat,  
 In august posture, blest by fate;  
 In splendid robes, ye seem divine,  
 While virtue cringes at the shrine.

The law you still keep on your side,  
 To foster more your nauseous pride;  
 And by its power a *tenth* command,  
 Of all the produce of the land.

And by the same usurious power,  
 A pastoral charge you can procure;  
 O'er many parishes at once,  
 Without their mind, which they renounce.

The pastoral duty you make light,  
 On pleasure's wings you take your flight,  
 Consume the fleeces of your sheep,  
 And lull their conscience sound asleep.

To substitutes ye do commit,  
 Parochial charge, as ye deem fit,  
 And curacies, within your fee,  
 Monopolized are this way.

Curates, who do the same obtain,  
 You skrew with eagerness amain;  
 A poor pittance deem enough,  
 Of hire, for the gospel plough.

Many of these poor honest men,  
 Are scarcely able to maintain  
 Themselves, with common decent fare,  
 Much less for families prepare.

This is not all, but they must be.  
 Dupes to your high supremacy;  
 And all you sacred rules obey,  
 And bear the burthen of the day.

Through carnal pleasures ye do waste,  
Both time and treasure as ye list;  
While charity must humbly sit,  
With piety beneath your feet.

'Twas strange! Oppression with such grace,  
Should thus in church or state take place;  
Or that injustice crown'd should be,  
With such public solemnity.

Once more, permit me for to say,  
'That your supineness, at this day;  
Has been a means to introduce,  
Impious woes through this abuse.

Because your sloth and ease expose  
You to the curse, and heavy woes;  
Which do on faithless shepherds lie,  
And such who love to souls deny.

In short, how can ye holy men,  
Blindfolded be, to all but gain?  
Or deem that an enlighten'd age,  
Will always bear this base usage.

Do you think that the church of God,  
Which is the purchase of his blood;  
Is nourish'd by your Lordships' grace.  
Or claims a kindred with your race?

Or think you that the prince of peace,  
Will thank your worships' humble grace?  
For your implicit kindness done,  
When he appears on a bright throne?

And calls the subjects of his love,  
Before his face, for to approve;  
And to reward their services,  
Then to consume his enemies!

I trust I shall not much transgress,  
 Against your lordships as I pass;  
 For to affirm that you depart,  
 From articles of this first rate.

For in the church when you appear,  
 Perhaps but seldom in the year;  
 And then deliver a discourse,  
 Morality you do enforce.

Upon the consciences of men,  
 That they salvation may obtain;  
 By moral duties of their own,  
 Which your practice does disown.

For were those doctrines you extol,  
 The life and comfort of your soul;  
 Ye certainly would not digress,  
 From their precepts in terms express.

Nor would your honours intermix,  
 Both vice and virtue, and prefix  
 That motto on your sacred domes,  
 That virtue here but seldom comes!

Nor would you with undaunted face,  
 Expose your selves to the disgrace;  
 Of hypocrites, and such as be,  
 A plague to all society.

This ye confirm, when that ye do  
 Livings and functions barter too;  
 I almost said the souls of men,  
 Merely to heap your sordid gain.

In short your burthens heavy lie  
 On all, but more especially  
 On such as value truth divine,  
 And would apostacy decline.



Besides, your dangerous scheme inverts,  
 Truth, reason, order—and converts  
 Effects to causes, and destroys  
 Both peace of mind and solid joys.

This is not all, for it comes short  
 Of that fountain, whose spring can comfort  
 All *Zion's* travellers, while they pass  
 Through this pilgrimage wilderness.

I should have said a little more,  
 But wearied am, must now therefore  
 No longer on your time intrude,  
 But shall this last address conclude.

Setting hypocrisy aside,  
 Which doth true piety deride;  
 And like infectious air does taint,  
 The very name of every saint.

Those barren trees do numerous grow,  
 In all professions here below;  
 Nor fruit do bear, nor aught, beside  
 Impious lust, and baneful pride.

Ye proud dissemblers ! don't ye know,  
 That tho' disguise may hide ye now ;  
 Yet presently the midnight cry,  
 Will you alarm most solemnly.

To my advice ye nothing owe,  
 Nor any characters I shew ;  
 Declaring vice was my intent,  
 By you *provoked* to repent.

This task I've done, without reserve,  
 Nor fear, nor favour of you crave ;  
 Submit the balance unto you,  
 My faltering speech now bids *adieu* !

The fox's speech being now quite done,  
 All his pursuers stood anon;  
 In stupid maze, through discontent,  
 At this astonishing event.

Some said the phenomenon was dumb,  
 There's nothing more for us but home;  
 Since all the the plots that we have laid,  
 Do not make him at least afraid.

Others reply'd, they would contrive  
 A trap, to catch him yet alive;  
 For pity it were he should be lost,  
 With all the pains he has us cost.

Yet most of them through much fatigue,  
 Did think their scheme but an intrigue;  
 For to detain them longer there,  
 And add suspense to weak despair.

Therefore, without further delay,  
 They would depart, nor longer stay;  
 Accordingly they left the place,  
 Leaving both reynard and the chace.

But *Icedon* lads, not yet content,  
 And to secure their foe, were bent,  
 To stay behind, and try their skill,  
 To captivate his lordship's will.

They brought some stones to that concave,  
 And wall'd him in without his leave;  
 Forgetting not to leave a slip,  
 More to secure him with a trap.

This having done, they then disperse,  
 In hopes he then their prisoner was;  
 Resolving boldly to return,  
 And take their prize at early morn.

Yet hopes, however high they rise,  
Are oft like vapours in the skies;  
So in this case, those men do find,  
Enjoyment higher than the wind.

For a *Bodkin*, with partner kind,  
To circumvent were both inclin'd;  
At midnight hour they sly repair,  
And found the fox fast in the snare.

In *poke* they put, without remorse,  
And what was yet still worse and worse;  
Stole him feloniously away,  
And sold him too as people say.

Unto a man at *Lanes-ends-four*,  
And did drink freely on that score;  
All the next day at charges free,  
Thinking that *fox* the shot would pay.

But human hopes, and midnight dreams,  
Are both alike in aim and ends;  
So prov'd events to these poor knaves,  
And stript them both as *Afric* slaves.

For when they to their friend did go,  
He scarce could lift his head or toe;  
Was now just at the point of death,  
And breathing out his latest breath.

Saying, *poor men!* I now am gone,  
Yet must entreat you every one;  
Who hear my fate, to shun alway,  
*Fox-hunting on the Sabbath day.*

Narrations of this kind I trust,  
Will give no rational disgust;  
But rather *idleness* disclaim,  
That nurse of vice, of every name.

Though gentlemen of the first rate,  
 Who stiled are as good and great ;  
 May follow sport without controul,  
 And waste their time, and sink their soul.

And though they think the same their own,  
 Or I may grant, yet truths disown ;  
 That this the liberty they take,  
 Will ample compensation make.

For evils, of whatever kind,  
 Soon poison the most generous mind ;  
 And leaven-like pervade the whole,  
 While virtue feeds on barren soil.

Therefore, since you and I are friends,  
 I now submit, for social ends,  
 Commend my duty to your love,  
 Freely to censure or approve.

F I N I S.



107